

Russia



Over 6.5 million square miles in area, Russia is far and away the largest country on earth. From the towering peaks of the Caucasus

Mountains to the waters of Baikal, the world's oldest and deepest lake, Russia's landscapes form an awe-inspiring tapestry of unique ecosystems which support such diverse species as Amur tigers, snow leopards, saiga antelope, Siberian cranes and giant taimen fish. Two-thirds of the world's remaining temperate forests are in Russia.

However, Russia's rich biodiversity is vulnerable and faces threats from habitat loss, poaching and global warming. To better manage

and conserve the numerous plant, migratory bird, fish and marine mammal species whose ranges encompass portions of both the United States and Russia, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, through the Wildlife Without Borders - Russia (WWB-Russia) program, cooperates with Russia in many ways, including information sharing and jointly-conducted scientific studies.

WWB-Russia sponsors training courses, conferences and consultative meetings, as well as exchanges of Russian and American field biologists. In addition, the program provides financial assistance to Russia's extensive network of nature reserves (zapovedniks) and national parks through a competitive small grants program which facilitates

the purchase of office and field equipment, patrol vehicles and boats, installation of communications, education and outreach, and infrastructure improvements and repairs. Those world-class, but financially challenged reserves offer sanctuary to endangered species and preserve vast stretches of forest habitat, whose importance as a carbon sink and as the Earth's lungs is increasingly recognized.

WWB-Russia has been a critical part of the conservation relationship between the United States and Russia for more than 35 years. Through the unceasing efforts of conservationists in both countries, the program helps preserve some of the most spectacular wildlife and valuable natural habitats remaining on our planet.



Polar bears (Ursus maritimus) USFWS

Since its inception, the Wildlife Without Borders – Russia program has contributed to a wide variety of highly successful cooperative conservation efforts, including:

- Conducting the first comprehensive survey of the Pacific walrus population shared by Russia and the United States. By taking thermal photographs from airplanes and directly monitoring populations from ships, FWS biologists have gained valuable information on this critical species.
- Purchasing and distributing more than one million bird bands throughout Russia. Banding migratory birds enables Russian and American biologists to track their movements across continents.
- Providing small grants to Russia's extensive nature reserve system, a network of protected areas covering over 90 million acres. These grants allow often under funded reserve staffs to purchase the modern equipment and supplies necessary to effectively protect those vast areas. Russia Program grants have provided everything from uniforms and cold weather clothing to new facilities, communications equipment, and land and water patrol vehicles.
- Implementing a bilateral agreement between Russia and the United States for the conservation of threatened polar bears. This continuing effort includes the use of the latest satellite tracking technology to monitor the movements of the shared Alaska-Chukotka polar bear population throughout its Arctic range.
- Protecting the critically endangered saiga, a medium-sized antelope whose numbers have plummeted from over 1,000,000 in 1990 to fewer than 30,000 individuals today. The



Walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*) USFWS

Wildlife Without Borders - Russia program has provided training and financial support to conserve saiga and their habitat.

- Donating more than 2,000 surplus uniforms for use by Russian refuge staff.
- Facilitating the cooperation, training and exchange of Russian and American field scientists, researchers and conservationists.



Spectacled Eider (*Somateria fischeri*)
USFWS



Saiga with calf (*Saiga tatarica*)
© R. Reading

Russia Program Funding from 2006 through 2010

Russia Program Funding from 2006 through 2010	
Total Number of Grants Awarded	55
Total Funds Distributed Through Grants	\$645,088
Total Partner Contributions Leveraged by Grants	\$123,400
Total Number of Conservationists Trained	58
Total Number of Habitats and Ecosystems Addressed	43
Total Number of Reserves and Parks Receiving Grants	91

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
International Affairs
Division of International Conservation
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 100
Arlington, VA 22203
703/358-1754
703/358-2115 fax
internationalconservation@fws.gov
<http://www.fws.gov/international>
twitter.com/USFWSInternatl
www.facebook.com/USFWSinternationalaffairs

February 2011

